

## QUARTERLY REPORT

**Date of Report:** February 15, 2005

**Contract Number:** AGREEMENT NO. DTRS56-03-T-0008

**Prepared for:** US DOT

**Project Title:** **A Comprehensive Update in the Evaluation of Pipeline Weld Defects**

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For quarterly period ending: December 31, 2004

### Public Page

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## A Comprehensive Update in the Evaluation of Pipeline Weld Defects

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### Summary

Girth weld defect acceptance criteria are set and enforced in all pipeline constructions in the U.S. per federal regulations (CFR 49 Parts 192 and 195). With the increased use of mechanized welding and AUT (Automated Ultrasonic Testing) in new pipeline constructions, alternative defect acceptance criteria based on ECA (Engineering Critical Assessment) principles are frequently used in lieu of the traditional workmanship criteria. The objective of this project is to provide technical basis towards a major update to the alternative girth weld defect acceptance criteria. There are two focus areas in this project. The first focus area is to update the alternative defect acceptance criteria to address the immediate need of the majority of onshore pipeline constructions in the U.S., typically with pipeline longitudinal strains less than 0.5%. The second focus area is the development of alternative defect acceptance criteria for pipelines in geotechnically challenging environments, such as arctic area and deep water offshore, alternatively termed strain-based design. No codified defect acceptance criteria yet exist for such service conditions. It is expected that the outcome of this project will form the technical basis for the revision of girth weld alternative acceptance criteria in North America, such as API 1104 Appendix A and CSA Z662 Appendix K.

### Progress in the First Year of the Project

The major accomplishment to date is the production of the girth weld defect assessment procedures for stress-based design, i.e., pipelines with longitudinal strains less than 0.5%. This is the key deliverable of the first focus area. To facilitate code-making process, a self-contained separate report was completed and distributed to DOT, PRCI, and API 1104 committee. The report covers (1) technical basis for the development of the revised girth weld defect acceptance criteria, (2) validation of the acceptance criteria against experimental test data, and (3) recommended structure for the revision of API 1104 Appendix A.

A public review meeting that covered the major outcome of the first focus area was held in Houston on October 13, 2004. The meeting was well attended by 33 representatives from the energy industry, PRCI member companies, and DOT. The minutes of the meeting and the viewgraphs were distributed to the meeting participants, DOT, and PRCI members.

With the completion of the most of the work in the first focus area, the attention of the project team in the last quarter of 2004 was turned to the second focus area, i.e., the development of girth weld defect acceptance criteria for strain-based design. After some

delays, the test materials were secured. Test procedures for laboratory-sized low-constraint specimens were further validated. Considerable efforts in the last quarter of 2004 were devoted to the design and logistic planning of the mini-wide plate test specimens. A large number of factors were considered in determining the proper specimen dimensions, including test machine load capacity, fixture of the test machine, welding of the end loading plates to the test section, specimen weight and handling, introduction of artificial defect into the girth weld, instrumentation, and data interpretation and validity. The specimen design is close to completion. The procedures for specimen fabrication, which is critical due to the large specimen size, have been put in place. Good progress is expected in the second focus area in the coming months.